14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

to take a little ride one day. Several chiefs were induced to try a ride, but one chief especially became quite frightened and a quick landing had to be made in order to keep him from jumping out.

The Nuer were quite alarmed when the planes appeared that morning, although they had been told some days before that planes were to come. Children ran screaming into the houses, men and women were badly frightened and dubious as to the purpose for which the 'boats of the sky' had come. Children stayed in the houses or near their homes, women would not go up to the merchants while the planes were flying.

Many were amazed by the short time taken for the flight from Malakal to Nasser, and realized to some extent that in case of need the planes with their guns might quickly come.

In the recent patrol the aeroplanes were again used as agents of war, so it is little wonder that to the Nuer the aeroplane is a thing of destruction, and they fear it accordingly.

The Government has shown an interest in the education of the Nuer and is eager to have schools among them. The authorities have sent several boys from Abwong to the mission school at Nasser and paid their expenses while there. These boys work in various capacities for the District Commissioner at Abwong, and when he is away he is anxious to have them in school. They were apt pupils. This same District Commissioner had one of the older boys from the Nasser school to conduct a school at Abwong for one season.

MISSION WORK AMONG THE NUER

The American Mission has long had a station at Nasser (Figs. 12 and 13). They work on evangelistic, medical,

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

797 and educational lines. Itinerating work is also done by the members of the mission.

They have a church, clinic, and school, as well as three dwelling houses and a storeroom. A number of fruit trees have been planted and they have plenty of fruit for personal use.

The personnel of this station consists of from four to six adults.

797 871 Practically all the school pupils are working on the compound. They go to school for an hour or two at least and then work the remainder of the working day. Their wages are based upon their working hours, but all children, especially those who show any aptitude in learning, are required to attend school. Should they refuse, which they seldom do, they are dropped from the workers' list and some other eager applicant is taken on who is not averse to going to school.

At the Nasser Mission the work-bell rings at 6 a.m. All workers then attend the service with morning prayers and roll-call from 6 a.m. to 6.30. a.m. At 6.30 the workers go to their work and school opens. Lessons continue in the school until nine o'clock when chapel is held.

At 9.30 all workers are given one-half hour for breakfast. At ten o'clock the work-bell again rings and work on the compound and in the school is resumed until 1 p.m. when the working day is finished.

797 743 At 6.30 a.m. the clinic is opened by the Nuer helpers, the doctor (if there is one) or nurses not coming until 9 o'clock, except for supervisory or emergency work.

Arabic-speaking people are cared for at the clinic from 9–10 a.m. as are all the workers who come. From 10 to 10.30 a.m. the clinic service is held, which consists of songs, prayers, and a Bible story. All Nuer and Anuak

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

patients, except those working on the compound, are supposed to be present if they wish for medicine that day; emergency cases are always treated at any time. After this service treatment is given to all who come. 797 743

On Sundays services are held in the church consisting of church service and Sunday school; in the afternoon a song service may be held. Or the song service may be omitted and a night church service held in one of the homes. The church can seldom be used at night on account of the ever-present mosquito. Sometimes the Bible lesson in church is given by a Nuer. Some of them show real talent for public speaking. There are from 150 to 160 Christians, but they are scattered throughout the various sections of Nuerland.

The church is not yet organized in the sense in which we understand organization. There is a committee of native Christians who have been appointed to supervise the receipt and expenditure of monies, but always with the aid of a missionary. A session is also appointed who help to examine candidates for baptism. Sometimes the examination they give is indeed rigid. The candidate's major sins of the past may be mentioned in detail. He is not merely asked to forsake sin, but those sins to which he is more subject are mentioned in particular. Sometimes a member of the session may be suspended, owing to some sin in which he has actively taken part.

Sometimes it seems as if the results of our work were small. Then some incident fills us with encouragement and we are amazed to find the extent to which the Nuer Christians are willing to trust Him whom they have so recently accepted as their God.

School work is carried on five days a week. The fact that all books must either be written in this language or translated into it is a serious handicap, for this transla- 797 871

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

●797 871 tion work takes time, and it is hard to keep new material prepared for the higher classes. English is taught to some extent, but the Nuer is taught in his own language first that he may learn to appreciate the things that are Nuer.

Student teachers are employed, pupils being thus trained to teach those who have not as yet learned as much as they have. In this way, a pupil teacher, returning to his village, knows how to teach what he has learned, be it much or little, to others.

A Nuer who is also a pupil in the advanced classes is supervisor of the school under the direction of a missionary.

The pupils do not pay for tuition. Only one case is known where a pupil at this school paid for his schooling in any way. This man was only able to go to school for an hour a day, but he was anxious to keep up with his class who were having two hours' instruction daily. He paid a Nuer for his services as private tutor each afternoon. This aspirant after an education was an Anuak, both he and his tutor were pupils in this school.

The Nuer boys sent by the Government official at Abwong to this school formed the greater portion of a boys' boarding school while they were there. The two men who are working for the District Commissioner at Nasser as his interpreters attend school all the time when they are not on trek.

The mission is busy now getting the books translated which were recommended by the Rejaf Language Conference of 1928.

There is a Roman Catholic Mission in another section of Nuerland, but I am unable at this time to give any definite facts about the work. I understand that one of the main features of it is the school. This mission will also use the course of study recommended by the Rejaf Language Conference.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Missionaries usually are victims of the ever-prevalent malaria but it does not daunt them, and they continue to love their people and their work. 797

But much remains undone; there is urgent need of mission work along any or all of the present lines—evangelistic, educational, and medical.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

way as an animal is dedicated, while a short invocation is made. They are decorated with beads and metal rings. I was told that now and again, especially after dreams, a prophet rubs his spirit's drum with ashes, and sometimes also with butter, and asks God for peace and happiness. A prophet also builds a mud shrine, called *yik* or, if it is shaped like a windscreen, *buor*, to his spirit, the largest monument of the first kind being the pyramid of *deng* in the Lou tribal territory (p. 306).

IV

I now come to the most difficult, and the most important, part of this survey. How do Nuer conceive of these spirits in relation to God? I do not attempt yet to make a full analysis of the notion of *kwoth*, but only to discuss a limited part of it, the nature of the spirits of the air; though what is said about them has some bearing on the nature of other spirits and of Spirit in general. The matter is, for us, complex and confusing, and the conclusion I reached about it, that the spirits of the air are conceived of as both separate beings and yet also as different manifestations of God, may at first sight seem to hold a contradiction.

We may say to begin with that there is no question of Nuer regarding these spirits as beings of the same importance as *kwoth a nhial*. Whatever else they may be thought to be they are not thought of as beings independent of and equal to him. There is only one God. This is evident from a number of facts.

In the first place, it is shown by the way Nuer regard the beliefs of neighbouring peoples. It creates no problem for them when they find other peoples approaching God under different titles and in different ways from their own. Some Nuer, in spite of the general isolation of the Nuer and their lack of interest in other peoples, are aware that in religious matters neighbouring peoples differ to a greater or lesser degree from themselves. Some of them know something of Dinka religious beliefs and ceremonies, and a few of them are also aware, though Islam has made no impression on them, that Arab traders have their own form of worship and, though the influence of the Christian missions has been negligible,[1] that the Christian missionaries and their converts have

[1] In 1940, some years after I had concluded my research, there were 464 Nuer (250 Catholics and 214 Protestants), easily the lowest figure for

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

theirs. I have found that when one of these Nuer who has had contacts with foreign peoples speaks of their religious beliefs and practices he shows that he does not regard them as having a different God from his own but merely as having a different name for him and a different manner of communicating with him. A Dinka prays to *kwoth a nhial*, whom he calls *nhialic*. Similarly the Muslim or Christian prays to *kwoth a nhial* under other names. Hence, though Nuer have taken over from neighbouring peoples various lesser spirits like the Dinka *deng* and the Shilluk *nyikang*, they have not taken over their deities, such as *nhialic* and *jwok*. The reason for this is undoubtedly that they identify these other deities with *kwoth a nhial*. *Kwoth a nhial*, *nhialic*, and *jwok* are one person who has different titles among different peoples. The Nuer attitude in this matter shows clearly the markedly monotheistic tendency of their religious thought. It is polyonymous, but not henotheistic. The inference we can draw from this in considering the spirits of the air is that they are not thought of as independent gods but in some way as hypostases of the modes and attributes of a single God.

A number of circumstances may have influenced Nuer thought in this matter. One important circumstance is that they have no proper name for God. He is simply *kwoth*, Spirit, and if they wish to distinguish him in speech they can only do so by a qualifying clause. It follows that since the Nuer God has no proper name he cannot be sharply distinguished in the mind from the God of a neighbouring people who is also inevitably regarded by the Nuer as *kwoth* and is therefore easily identified with him; and the titles by which other peoples call God do not present to the Nuer an obvious challenge or any kind of contradiction which might lead to monolatry or to more precise metaphysical definition. It follows also that since the only word in Nuer for God, *kwoth*, means simply 'Spirit' any spiritual being is also *kwoth*. This in itself, apart from the absence of any organized cult and developed political institutions,[1] has allowed easy entrance to foreign spirits. All

any of the major peoples of the Southern Sudan. The missions were then American Presbyterian at Nasser on the Sobat (founded in 1913), Catholic at Yoahnyang on the Bahr al-Ghazal (founded in 1929), and Anglican at Ler to the west of the Nile (founded in 1932) and Juaibor to the east of the Nile (founded in 1936). This information was supplied by the heads of the various missions.

[1] W. Hofmayr, op. cit., p. 160, reports that a Shilluk who erected a shrine to